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The FBI Investigates the Freeze Movement

President Reagan's charge at his press conference last week that Soviet agents are involved in the domestic nuclear-freeze movement was based on a secret Federal Bureau of Investigation study. The White House has identified the Reader's Digest and State Department reports as Reagan's sources. In fact, after reading one Reader's Digest article outlining a Soviet link with the freeze movement, the president asked the FBI to confirm the charge. The bureau reported that there is hard evidence that Moscow has tried to infiltrate and exploit the U.S. peace movement. But according to one bureau source, the report does not contend that the Kremlin inspired the movement or controls its leaders. FBI counterintelligence chief Edward O'Malley's recent testimony on the subject before the House intelligence committee is under review for possible declassification. Freeze advocates, including Republican Sen. Mark Hatfield of Oregon, have challenged Reagan's accusation. Similar charges were made repeatedly against the anti-Vietnam War movement; no significant Soviet involvement was ever proved.

The PLO's Missing Members

Israeli intelligence says it has discovered that the camps in Tunisia that accommodated 1,000 PLO guerrillas after their evacuation from Beirut are now empty. Israeli officials suspect that the fighters have made their way back to the Mideast—either to Syria or Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. American Mideast specialists say that Syria has recently tightened its border watch to prevent PLO fighters from sneaking back into Lebanon; they speculate that Syria is fearful of provoking an Israeli attack.

How to Stop Soviet High-Tech Spies

Washington's campaign to stop the Soviet theft of technology may handicap American businessmen more than the secret-snatchers, according to a Senate study to be released this week. The Senate's Permanent Investigating Subcommittee reports that the Commerce Department tries to protect so many high-tech commodities that its limited resources are spread too widely to be effective. The proposed solution: having the intelligence agencies work harder to pinpoint the particular innovations that Moscow covets most; security measures could then be concentrated on those areas. The panel also recommends that customs officers be given broader powers and that the federal wiretap law be expanded to permit easier surveillance of suspected poachers.

The CIA: In From the Cold

The Central Intelligence Agency has boosted its influence to new levels during the Reagan administration, by at least one measure. Under Director William Casey, the CIA has sharply increased its production of National Intelligence Estimates. Based on both public and secret information, the NIE's address such topics as Soviet nuclear strength, international terrorism and world oil reserves. The reports are designed to be used by policymaking officials, but they are often ignored. Nonetheless, the number of NIE's can be a rough indicator of the CIA's standing. When Jimmy Carter was president the CIA turned out about 12 a year. That number more than tripled during the first year of the Reagan administration and will probably reach 60 in 1982.

China Arms Iraq

China has set up a stall in the Middle East arms bazaar. United States intelligence officials say that China is now a major source of military supplies for Iraq. According to a new report, Iraq buys one-quarter of all its weaponry from China; that accounts for half of China's arms-export total. Most Chinese weapons are based on Soviet models, which makes it easy for Iraq to integrate the Chinese equipment into its largely Soviet arsenal.

ERIC GELMAN with bureau reports